

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 211420

FOR USLOG DEL

FOLLOWING REPEAT BRIDGETOWN 2306 ACTION SECSTATE
INFO NASSAU 16 AUG 78.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 2306

S/AR FOR AMBASSADOR ALDRICH

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, BB, US

SUBJ: NAVAL FACILITY NEGOTIATIONS - BARBADOS

REF: BRIDGETOWN 2244

1. FORNMIN FORDE WAS UNABLE TO KEEP MY APPOINTMENT
WITH HIM MORNING AUGUST 16 PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE ON LEAVE.
FORDE IS WINDING UP BARBADOS CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE.
I INSTEAD SAW PERMSEC SYMONDS WHO ASSURED ME
HE SPOKE WITH MINISTER'S FULL AUTHORITY.

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2. SYMONDS REPEATED TO ME EARLIER TELEPHONIC REGRETS THAT
LARGE PORTIONS OF THE POSITION TAKEN BY BARBADOS DURING THE
DISCUSSIONS WITH AMBASSADOR ALDRICH WERE MADE PUBLIC. HE
REITERATED THAT PUBLICATION RESULTED FROM A TOTALLY
INADVERTENT MISTAKE. HE SAID RELEASE OF OUR OFFER AND
OF BARBADOS' REJECTION OF IT BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE
WAS NOT INTENDED TO EMBARRASS US AND THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE

WAS GREATLY CONCERNED AND MUCH REGRETTE THE INCIDENT.
SYMMONDS SAID AMBASSADOR JACKMAN
WAS BEING INSTRUCTED PERSONALLY TO CONVEY THE
ABOVE TO AMBASSADOR ALDRICH.

3. I TOLD SYMMONDS THAT WHILE I REGRETTE THE LEAK IT
WAS NOW A FACT. I WANTED TO KNOW WHAT BARBADOS
CONSIDERED SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEP.

4. SYMMONDS SAID THE ENTIRE NAVFAC QUESTION WAS
DISCUSSED BY THE CABINET WHICH HAS ADOPTED A POSITION
ON NEXT STEPS. THIS POSITION WILL SOON BE COMMUNICATED
TO US IN THE FORM OF A NOTE.

5. SPEAKING PERSONALLY I SUGGESTED THAT IN THE
MIDDLE OF NEGOTIATIONS PERHAPS IT WAS
BETTER NOT TO PUT POSITIONS IN WRITING. PERHAPS THE
CABINET POSITION COULD BE CONVEYED ORALLY. HOWEVER,
MR. SYMMONDS SAID THE GOB PREFERRED TO COMMUNICATE ITS
POSITION IN WRITING.

6. AGAIN SPEAKING PERSONALLY I WONDERED IF IT WOULD
NOT BE USEFUL FOR BOTH SIDES TO CONTINUE WORKING ON
AN AGREED TEXT OF A NEW AGREEMENT SINCE SOME PROGRESS
HAD BEEN MADE IN THIS DIRECTION. MR. SYMMONDS SAID
THAT THE KEY QUESTION WAS THE "QUANTUM" OF THE RENTAL
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PAYMENT. ONCE THIS WAS SATISFACTORY, EVERYTHING ELSE
COULD BE EASILY RESOLVED. BARBADOS, HE SAID, CERTAINLY
AND THE U.S. PROBABLY HAD NEITHER THE TIME NOR THE
PERSONNEL TO INDULGE IN "ACADEMIC EXERCISES" WHICH
DEPENDED ENTIRELY ON THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THE U.S. RENTAL
OFFER.

7. SYMMONDS SEVERAL TIMES REFERRED TO U.S. ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE TO BARBADOS. I OF COURSE TOLD HIM THAT
SUBJECT COULD NOT BE LINKED TO NAVFAC NEGOTIATIONS.
SYMMONDS NONETHELESS SAID BARBADOS EXPECTED THAT ANY
REGIONAL U.S. ASSISTANCE SHOULD CONTAIN RESOURCES UPON
WHICH BARBADOS CLEARLY COULD DRAW.

8. IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION SYMMONDS PERHAPS
SIGNIFICANTLY BUT ALMOST CASUALLY MENTIONED THAT "ONLY
A FEW HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS" SEPARATED OUR TWO
POSITIONS ON THE AMOUNT OF THE RENTAL.

9. THE OPPOSITION'S FOREIGN POLICY EXPERT TELLS
ME THAT HIS PARTY COLLEAGUES WILL NOT COMMENT
PUBLICLY ON THE NAVFAC NEGOTIATIONS.

THEIR VIEW THE GOVERNMENT'S BUMBLING ON THIS ISSUE CAN
BE LIKENED TO THAT OF THE CONDEMNED BUSILY ERECTING
HIS OWN EXECUTION SCAFFOLD.

10. COMMENT: WE SHALL AWAIT RECEIPT OF NOTE WITH NEW
GOB POSITION BEFORE MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS.
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UNQUOTE VANCE

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